

SAM RAYBURN HOUSE

— STATE HISTORIC SITE —
Bonham, Texas

Post-Visit Guide

Grade 7

Overview: The House that Mr. Speaker Built

Sam Rayburn, during his 48 years in the U.S. House of Representatives, played an influential part in the passing of a long list of important legislation. In this lesson, students will focus on his leadership role in the 85th Congress alongside fellow Texan and Senate Majority Leader, Lyndon B. Johnson.

Social Studies TEKS

(17) Citizenship. The student understands the importance of the expression of different points of view in a democratic society. The student is expected to:

(C) express and defend a point of view on an issue of historical or contemporary interest in Texas.

(18) Citizenship. The student understands the importance of effective leadership in a democratic society. The student is expected to:

(A) identify the leadership qualities of elected and appointed leaders of Texas, past and present, including Texans who have been president of the United States; and

(B) identify the contributions of Texas leaders, including Sam Rayburn.

(21) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired through established research methodologies from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology.

The student is expected to:

(A) differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as computer software, databases, media and news services, biographies, interviews, and artifacts to acquire information about Texas;

(B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions;

(E) support a point of view on a social studies issue or event;

(G) evaluate the validity of a source based on language, corroboration with other sources, and information about the author

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Materials

- Historical images
- Primary and secondary sources activity images
- *Mr. Sam, Mr. Speaker* video link <https://youtu.be/3ks41sLE6qs>
- Cokie Roberts: Sam Rayburn and Lyndon Baines Johnson video link <https://youtu.be/ouV4IgDPok4>

Activity: Rayburn House Visit

10 minutes

Ask students to reflect on their visit to the Sam Rayburn House Historic Site by completing all columns of their **KWL chart**. Have students share their experiences including any new questions raised by the visit.

Activity: Two Texas Giants

20 minutes

Context: In the 85th U.S. Congress (1957-1959), the Democratic party had the majority in both the House and the Senate during the fifth and sixth years of Dwight Eisenhower's Republican presidential administration. Eisenhower, who had gained renown for his achievements as a military general, was often frustrated by career politicians in Congress. When describing how he felt sending a message to Congress about the National Park Service in 1956, he said, “Well, it’s like laying pearls before certain animals...”

Eisenhower’s legislative priorities succeeded primarily because of his bipartisan working relationships with Speaker Sam Rayburn and Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson. On important issues, the President negotiated privately with Rayburn and Johnson. Between the “Rayburn Touch” in the House and the “Johnson Treatment” (skilled persuasion involving wooing, arm-twisting, and sometimes bullying) in the Senate, Congress successfully passed various Eisenhower legislation, such as the controversial Civil Rights Act of 1957. Though much of the act’s original intent to extend the vote to African-Americans was watered down by legislative compromise, it was the first civil rights law passed by Congress in 80 years.

Display the signed **photograph of Lyndon Baines Johnson**.

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Point out the similarities between Rayburn and Johnson, including:

- Both men were born to large families and were raised on family farms in Texas.
- Like Rayburn, Johnson was a teacher before attending law school and eventually entering politics.
- At age 46, LBJ became the youngest Majority Leader in U.S. Rayburn was the youngest Speaker elected by the Texas House of Representatives at age 29.
- In the 85th Congress, Rayburn and Johnson effectively “ran Congress,” as Rayburn returned as Speaker of the House and Johnson rose to Senate Majority Leader.

Rayburn and Johnson were able to work with a president from an opposing party. Have students discuss the roles of collaboration and compromise in a divided government. What are some reasons that members of an opposing party would agree to support legislation proposed by “the other side”?

Activity: Vote for Me!

20 minutes

Review student understanding of representative democracy and the bicameral structure of U. S. Congress. One possible resource is Kids in the House, an **interactive website** maintained by the Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives. <https://kids-clerk.house.gov/middle-school/>

Discuss the similarities and differences between the House and the Senate. Hold an election in class for Congress. Ask students to choose to run for either a House or Senate seat. Give them time to prepare a 1-minute campaign speech. Have all students “campaign” (present their speeches) and then take a vote for a winning candidate from both the House and the Senate.

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Activity: Sorting Sources

20 minutes

Divide students into small groups. Review the differences between primary and secondary sources.

★ **Primary source:** Provides firsthand evidence about an event, object, person, or work of art. Primary sources include diaries, letters, speeches, legal documents, eyewitness accounts, audio and video recordings, and art objects. They may also include newspaper or magazine articles if they are written as direct accounts soon after the fact.

★ **Secondary source:** Describes, discusses, analyzes, summarizes, and processes primary sources. Secondary sources can be articles in newspapers or popular magazines, book or movie reviews, or articles found in scholarly journals that discuss or evaluate someone else's original research.

Ask students to recall the YouTube video, “Mr. Sam, Mr. Speaker” and determine whether this resource would be considered a primary or secondary source. [Although it contains many primary source images, the video itself summarizes Rayburn’s historical significance and is therefore considered a secondary source.]

Distribute the provided **primary/secondary source activity sheets**. Have each group study the resource closely. Then have them circle either the PRIMARY or SECONDARY label once they have identified which type of source it is. Have each group present their conclusions to the class.

Answers:

- newspaper clipping: primary
- video interview: primary
- book excerpt: secondary
- news script: primary
- encyclopedia entry: secondary

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SS/ELA Extension Activity: Dear Congress Member,

ELA TEKS

(18) Writing/Persuasive Texts. Students write persuasive texts to influence the attitudes or actions of a specific audience on specific issues. Students are expected to write a persuasive essay to the appropriate audience that:

- (A) establishes a clear thesis or position;
- (B) considers and responds to the views of others and anticipates and answers reader concerns and counter-arguments; and
- (C) includes evidence that is logically organized to support the author's viewpoint and that differentiates between fact and opinion.

(28) Listening and Speaking/Teamwork. Students work productively with others in teams. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to participate productively in discussions, plan agendas with clear goals and deadlines, set time limits for speakers, take notes, and vote on key issues.

Have students research to find their state or national Congressional representatives. As a class, brainstorm issues they would like their representatives to address by proposing new legislation. Tell each student to choose one issue that is most important to them and write a letter outlining what that legislation would include and persuading their representative to take action to make a difference.

Assessment

Evaluate students' final KWL charts for completeness and understanding.

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A final word from Mr. Sam

Citation: United States. Congress. (87th, 1st session : 1961). House. *The Leadership of Speaker Sam Rayburn*, book, 1961; Washington D.C. University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, texashistory.unt.edu
texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph14386/m1/7/?q=sam%20rayburn%20letter (Accessed June 23, 2018).

“I know our country is great—men and women have made it great. I have the faith to believe that the youth of this land and the great schools, the high schools, colleges, and universities of this land have within them the elements of good citizenship so that they will in the years to come preserve, protect, defend, and perpetuate the institutions of this, the mightiest, the freest, and the best government that has ever blessed human beings at any time or in any clime.”

--Sam Rayburn

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Activity Image: Two Giant Texans

Citation: Moss Photo. [Photograph of Lyndon B. Johnson], Date unknown, University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, crediting Sam Rayburn House Museum. texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht183489/m1/1/?q=rayburn%20lyndon%20johnson (Accessed July 29, 2018).



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Activity Sorting newspaper

Citation: [Newspaper
Smiles], Date

of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, texashistory.unt.edu crediting Sam Rayburn House Museum.
texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph787766/m1/1/ (Accessed June 9, 2018).

For Speaker Rayburn To a great Texan who has made his country,
his party, and his time greater—with warm admiration

Lyndon B. Johnson

Image: Sources clipping

Clipping: Victory
Unknown, University

PRIMARY

SECONDARY

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VICTORY SMILES — House Speaker-designate Sam Rayburn (right) and Senator Lyndon B. Johnson smile broadly before their conference at the home of Congressman Rayburn here Friday. The two Texans, who will head up the House and Senate in the 84th Congress, conferred here briefly before Senator Johnson flew to Washington for the opening of the special Senate session Monday on the proposed censure of Senator Joseph McCarthy. (Photo by Ballew Studio)

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Activity Image: Sorting Sources video interview

PRIMARY SECONDARY

US House History. “Cokie Roberts: Speaker Sam Rayburn of Texas and Future President Lyndon Baines Johnson”

Ms. Roberts describes the relationship between her parents (U.S. Representatives Hale and Lindy Boggs of Louisiana), Speaker Sam Rayburn of Texas, and future President Lyndon Baines Johnson. The interview was conducted on June 23, 2009 by the Office of History and Preservation as part of the U.S. House of Representatives Oral History Program.

<https://youtu.be/ouV4IgDPok4>



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Activity Image: Sorting Sources Profiles in Power book excerpt

Profiles in Power: Twentieth-Century Texans in Washington, New Edition, edited by Kenneth E. Hendrickson, Jr., Michael L. Collins, Patrick Cox

PRIMARY

SECONDARY

Following World War II, Texans continued to exercise an enormous influence in the back rooms and corridors of Congress. While the shrewd and sagacious Rayburn—a masterful parliamentarian and a brilliant cloak-room diplomat—ruled the House as Speaker longer than anyone in U.S. history, his ambitious protégé, Lyndon Baines Johnson, was rising to the position of Senate majority leader, all the while learning well from “Mr. Sam” both the written and the unwritten rules of legislative strategy. During the Cold War decade of the 1950s, the personal and political partnership between the two Texans produced one of the most powerful and fruitful alliances in the history of the U.S. Congress. Together, Rayburn and Johnson reigned like lords on Capitol Hill during the presidency of Dwight Eisenhower.

Of course, the domination of these two giants from Texas over the institutions of Congress was no simple accident of the seniority system. The tremendous clout that they wielded was a reflection of the growth and maturity of Texas as a major economic force within the United States. With the emergence of the powerful oil and natural gas interests, the increasing importance of Texas-based commercial and industrial aviation, and the growing influence of defense industries in Texas, the economic well being of the Lone Star State became inexorably linked with the prosperity and security of the entire nation.

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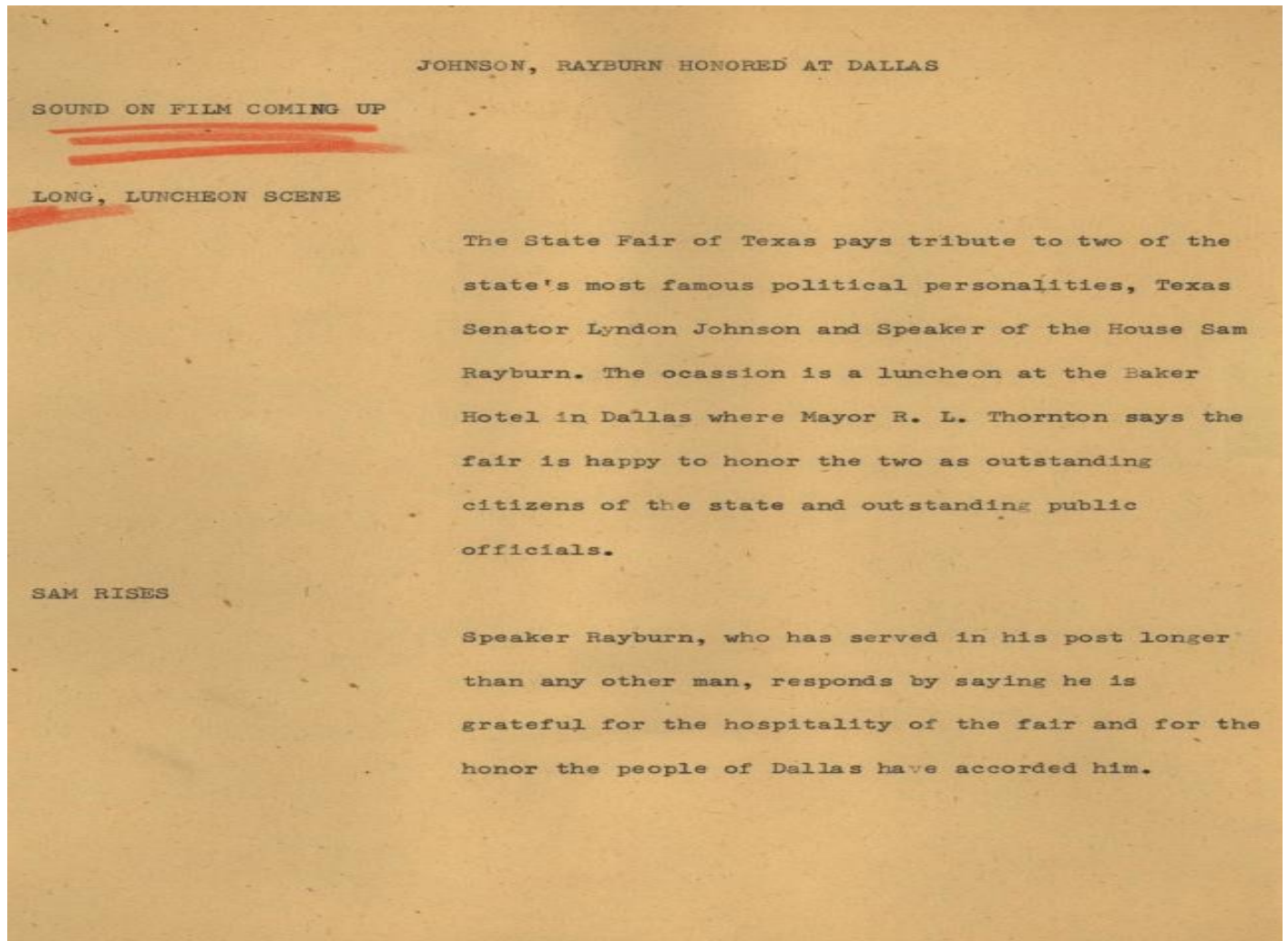
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Activity Image: Sorting Sources news script

Citation: WBAP-TV (Television station : Fort Worth, Tex.). [News Script: Johnson, Rayburn honored at Dallas], item, October 13, 1955;(texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc778544/m1/1/?q=rayburn%20lyndon%20johnson: accessed July 29, 2018), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, texashistory.unt.edu; crediting UNT Libraries Special Collections.

PRIMARY

SECONDARY



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Activity Image: Sorting Sources encyclopedia excerpt written by Lyndon Baines Johnson and the editors of Encyclopedia Britannica

PRIMARY

SECONDARY

7/26/2018

Sam Rayburn -- Britannica Online Encyclopedia

Sam Rayburn

Sam Rayburn, in full **Samuel Taliaferro Rayburn**, (born Jan. 6, 1882, Roane county, Tenn., U.S.—died Nov. 16, 1961, Bonham, Texas), American political leader, who served as speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives for nearly 17 years. He was first elected to the House in 1912 and served there continuously for 48 years 8 months, which at the time of his death was a record tenure. He was elected to Congress 25 consecutive times. The Rayburn House Office Building, a congressional office building on Capitol Hill, was named in his memory.



Rayburn, Sam

Sam Rayburn.

*From the Records of the Office of War
Information in the National Archives,
Washington, D.C.*

Life

Rayburn's family, of predominantly Scottish origin, moved from Tennessee to Texas in 1887, and there Rayburn grew up on a 40-acre farm. He worked his way through East Texas Normal College (now Texas A&M University—Commerce), taught school, and became a lawyer. He served in the Texas House of Representatives for six years (1907–13) and in 1911 was elected speaker. The following year he was elected to the U.S. Congress, where he remained for almost a half century.

Energetic, studious, ambitious, and affable, Rayburn quickly became influential behind the scenes in government and in party politics. As chairman (1931–37) of the powerful House Committee on Interstate and

Foreign Commerce, he was a major architect of the New Deal. As a member of the House of Representatives, he was coauthor of six important laws—the Emergency Railroad Transportation Act, the "Truth-in-Securities" Act, the Stock Exchange Act, the Federal Communications Act, the Rural Electrification Act, and one of the most bitterly contested of all New Deal laws, the Public Utility Holding Company Act.

Rayburn was elected Democratic leader of the House of Representatives in 1937 and became speaker of the House on Sept. 16, 1940. He held the latter office for almost 17 years, exceeding by a wide margin the previous record set by Kentucky statesman Henry Clay in the first quarter of the 19th century. Noted for his tart common sense, his honesty, and his unflagging patriotism, Rayburn was a trusted adviser to Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and John F. Kennedy. A dedicated party man who described himself as a Democrat "without prefix, without suffix, and without apology," Rayburn was often called "Mr. Democrat." He was permanent chairman of the Democratic National Convention in 1948, 1952, and 1956. After he won the battle in 1961 to enlarge the House Committee on

<https://www.britannica.com/print/article/492433>

1/3

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